

郭杰克 编

英语活页快速阅读文选

广西人民出版社

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前 言

我们学习英语和阅读英语书刊的目的，是为了获取所需要的信息。在阅读过程中，根据所阅读材料的内容、难易程度以及阅读目的决定我们的阅读速度。若不根据所读材料的性质去调整阅读速度，而仅用一种速度进行阅读，不仅会浪费大量的时间，而且还会影响理解。据研究，如果一个人只能以一种速度进行阅读，这种速度几乎总是慢速度。而当阅读速度慢到一定程度时，就会影响理解。因为运用慢速进行阅读有一个饱和点，而超过了这一极限，慢速会使理解下降。指出这一点对习惯于逐字阅读的读者来说，尤为重要。

根据我们所阅读的材料和目的，阅读速度基本上可以分为精读速度、普通阅读速度和快速阅读三种。

精读速度是最慢的阅读速度，主要用于较难译或需要高度理解的材料，而且还希望尽可能记住其内容的材料。

普通阅读速度是用于日常对杂志、书报和难度一般的课文的阅读。一般来说，我们大多数情况下都是用普通阅读速度进行阅读的。普通阅读速度往往会根据对阅读内容是否熟悉和阅读的目的而有所变化。

快速阅读是以一个人可能达到的最快速度去进行阅读。掠读和寻读是进行快速阅读的两种实用的方法。根据经验估计，掠读速度应当是普通阅读速度的一倍，但理解率可以有意识地适当降低。

我们运用掠读法进行快速阅读时，主要是为了获取所读材料的大意或内容提要，弄清该材料的段落结构，或了解作者的写作意图和文体风格。我们进行掠读时，通常是以尽可能快的速度去浏览全文，并争取通过寻找每一段的关键句、词和词组，抓住段落大意。

要熟练地掠读，需要练习。我们进行掠读练习时，基本上可以按下列步骤进行：

1) 扫视文章的标题和插图。

2) 以较快的速度阅读文章的第一段，因为一篇文章的中心论点通常是在第一段里提出的。

3) 扫视全文各段落并注意寻找以下几方面的信息：

(1) 每段的大意和较为重要的事实。

(2) 一些关键词和词组，如人名、日期、数字和修饰语。

(3) 表示文章语篇结构的标识语，如 *but, on the contrary, however* (表示否定或转折)；*namely, in short, generally* (表示详述或概括)；*recently, at present, meanwhile* (表示时间)；*first, second, finally* (表示先后顺序)等等。

(4) 阅读结束段，因为这一段通常含有总结性的内容。

寻读是用于平时需要迅速地在所读的材料中找出某个具体问题的答案或一些具体事实，如人名、日期、统计数字等等。我们在查阅词典或电话簿时，通常都运用寻读法。寻读不是

平时所说的“阅读”，因为进行寻读时，不需要理解全文的大意，只要求获取需要的具体信息。因此，在寻读时，通常是以“一目十行”的速度去扫视阅读材料，甚至跳过材料的某些部分不读，直至查到所需要的信息。

在进行快速阅读的过程中，掠读和寻读这两种方法经常可以交替使用。因为我们在初读一篇文章时，通常运用掠读，以了解文章的大意，然后再通过寻读去查找想记住的一些具体事实。

掠读是一种十分有用的阅读方法，因为我们可以利用这种方法去进行大量的阅读，使我们不仅能对所关心的问题经常有所了解，而且还可以帮助我们积累大量的参考资料。寻读在有针对性地去查找资料方面则能发挥很好的作用，我们可以带着问题并通过寻读在有关的资料中去查找问题的答案。此外，通过掠读和寻读进行快速阅读方面的练习也有助于提高其它两种阅读速度。

我们在进行快速阅读练习时，还应注意克服阅读过程中的一些不良习惯。阅读过程是脑力活动，不是体力活动。因此在进行快速阅读时，我们要避免除了眼部肌肉活动以外的其它外部活动，如在阅读时用手指或铅笔指着每一个字，移动头部或读出声。因为这些活动不但对提高阅读速度没有好处，反会减慢阅读速度。

本活页文选是供文理工各科学公共英语的学生在课堂上作快速阅读练习时使用，也可以作为同等水平的英语自学者练习快速阅读时使用。本文选收录的文章均选自美国供提高学生阅读能力的原版书，题材面广，富有情趣，涉及名人传、文娱、科技、体育和世界古今趣闻等五方面内容。本文选除了具有短小精悍、生动有趣的特点外，还为培养学生掌握根据上下文推测词义，回忆文中所述的具体事实，掌握文中事情发生的先后顺序，进行推断和找出文章的主题思想，这五种基本阅读理解技能提供了方法和练习。

本文选包括供两个学期使用的活页快速阅读短文共75篇。每篇短文是由配有插图的反映真人真事的记叙文，培养五种基本阅读理解技能中的某种技能的提示和两个旨在训练学生掌握这一技能的问题组成。

文选最好由教师统一保管，每次使用时发给学生（一张），并应注意在进行快速阅读练习前不要求学生预习，阅读后应做完练习题并记录阅读时间。每做完一次练习后，教师最好当场给出正确答案，因为让学生及时知道自己的答题结果正确与否，有助于提高学习效果。

文选还附有参考答案。参考答案最好统一由教师保管，以便掌握学生的理解准确度。

由于经验和水平有限，错误或不足之处在所难免，欢迎批评、指正。

编者

1986年2月

于华南工学院

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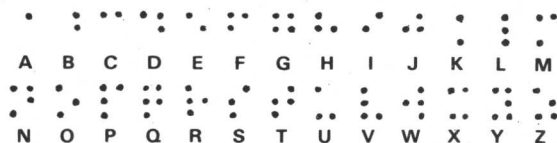
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II . Answer Key

An Alphabet of Dots—A Key to Learning



Developing Word Sense

When you are reading and find a word you are not sure of, look at the words and sentences that come before and after the word for clues to its meaning. As you read this passage, look closely at all of the sentences in paragraph two.

How important can a fifteen-year-old's work be? Well, Louis Braille's work changed the world.

Braille was born in 1809. When he was three, he was struck in the eye with a sharp tool. He became completely blind. He wanted to learn, but in his small town there was no school to teach him. At that time, most blind people did not become educated. Braille went to Paris to study. But there were few books for the blind.

Louis knew that books were the key to learning. He struggled with ideas for three years. Finally, at fifteen, he invented an alphabet made with raised dots. The dots were arranged in a certain pattern for each letter. Blind people could then "read" by feeling the patterns of the dots.

It was many years before his invention was widely used. But the Braille alphabet still helps the blind gain the knowledge found in books,



Find the Best Meaning

Put an x in the box before the best answer.

"Louis knew that books were the key to learning." In this sentence, key means

- ☐ a. a metal instrument for unlocking doors.
- ☐ b. a list of answers.
- ☐ c. the important thing that makes something possible.
- ☐ d. a scale of musical notes.

Putting Context to Work

Braille's handicap is mentioned three times in the sentences in paragraph two. Write the word that tells what Braille's handicap was.

The Trick of Fire-Eating

Developing Word Sense

The context of a passage is made up of all the words in it. It is the setting. Because the passage is about one thing, we can say that the words in the passage are all used in the same context. Use context to help you learn more about words as you are reading.

"Ladies and gentlemen, you won't believe your eyes! Watch the center ring as Ferdinand the Great swallows a flaming torch."

You may have heard a circus ringmaster shout these words. Your eyes probably never left Ferdinand's face. You knew that no one could really swallow flames, but you saw it with your own two eyes. Or did you?

Some circus tricks truly depend on courage and skill. Others, such as acts with fire, depend on chemicals and tricks. A fire-breather, for instance, places in his cheek a sponge that has been soaked in a special substance. When he blows the fumes from the sponge onto a lit candle, great flames leap up. It looks like he's breathing fire.

Fire-eating depends on a special way of breathing. The performer looks like he is eating a burning torch. But, in reality, he breathes on the torch and puts it out before it enters his mouth. This trick takes practice and exact timing. If the flame goes out too soon, the audience will notice. If it goes out too late, the fire-eater's throat could be burned to a crisp!



Find the Best Meaning

Put an x in the box before the best answer. A fire-breather blows fumes from a sponge onto a candle flame. Fumes are

- ☐ a. tricks.
- ☐ b. vapors.
- ☐ c. air.
- ☐ d. liquids.

Putting Context to Work

A sentence in the third paragraph talks about a special substance. The sentence that comes before contains a word that tells what kind of a substance it is. Find the word and circle it.

What a Fine Web It Weaves!

Developing Word Sense

The word **but** is important to a reader. In the middle of a sentence, it means that something different or opposite is coming up. In the third paragraph of this passage, the word helps us to understand what is meant by **solidify**.

What do you know about spiders? You probably have observed their webs, but do you know how the webs are formed?

First the spider spins the central strands. These long strands are not sticky like the rest of the web. The spider walks on them while it builds the remainder of its web. Weaving strands back and forth, it fills in the pattern. Some of these strands are coated with a sticky substance that helps the spider catch its prey.

The material the spider uses to make a web comes from its body. Glands at its rear make the substance. The strands are liquid when they are made, but they **solidify** when they hit the air.

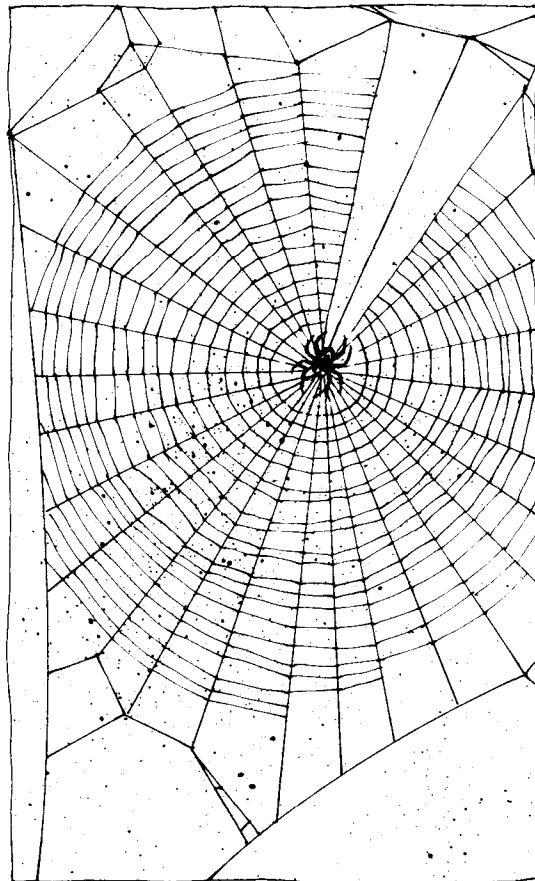
Spiders don't live in their webs. They hide behind them, waiting for the dinner bell to ring. When something lands on the web, the web begins to shake. The spider scurries out to investigate, and gets ready for a feast!

Find the Best Meaning

Put an x in the box before the best answer.

The strands of the spider's web solidify when they hit the air. This means they

- ☐ a. fill in.
- ☐ b. get sticky.
- ☐ c. become hard.
- ☐ d. grow long.



Putting Context to Work

Use the context, or the surrounding words in the sentence, to complete this sentence.

When a spider is waiting for the "dinner bell to ring," it is waiting for something to _____

The Birth of Basketball

Developing Word Sense

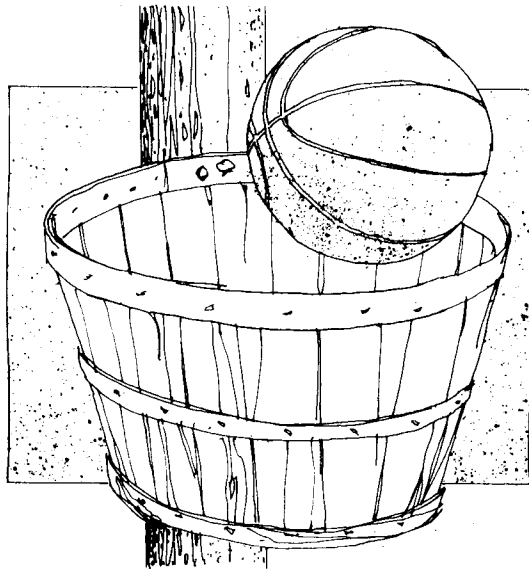
Good readers use the context of a word—the words and sentences that come before and after it in a story or passage—to help them understand a new and unfamiliar word. As you read, look to the surrounding words for help in understanding the meaning of any word you are unsure of.

Basketball is a sport enjoyed by millions of fans in at least 100 countries. It's one of the best-known sports in the world. It all began in 1891.

Dr. James A. Naismith, the father of basketball, was an instructor at a YMCA training school. The school trained people to work in YMCAs. Officials at the school were concerned about the low attendance during the winter months. They felt that people didn't attend then because the school did not have a good winter sports program. So they asked Dr. Naismith for help. He came up with a new indoor game.

Naismith studied current games. He found that all the most popular games used a ball. So a ball would be part of his new game, he decided. But kicking the ball or hitting it would be too rough for indoors. So he put two peach baskets up on poles. The players had to try to throw a soccer ball into them. Naismith then made thirteen rules for the game. Twelve of them are still in use today. Just seven years after the game began, professional basketball teams were formed.

And that's how basketball was born.



Find the Best Meaning

Put an x in the box before the best answer. YMCA officials were concerned about attendance. This means they were

- ☐ a. angry.
- ☐ b. uninterested.
- ☐ c. organized.
- ☐ d. worried.

Putting Context to Work

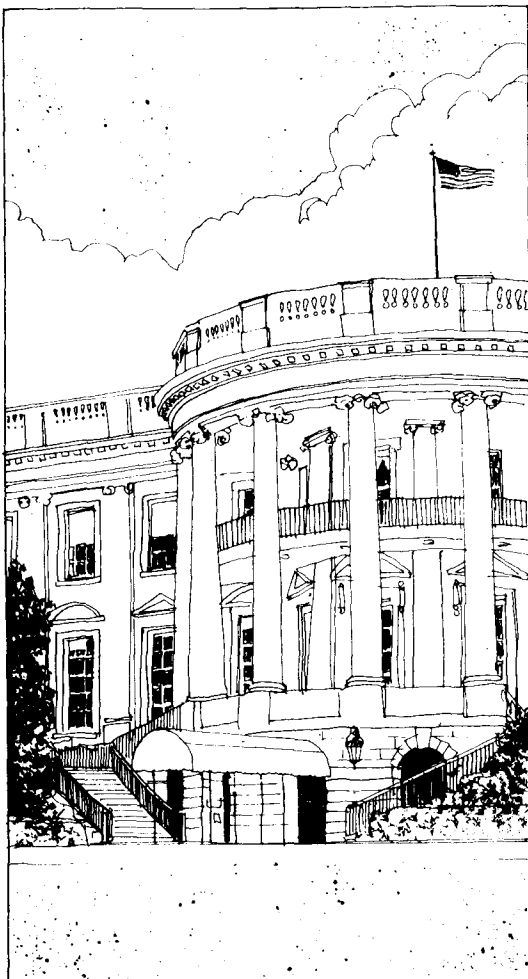
The passage tells us that Dr. Naismith studied current games. What are current games? Underline your answer.

- a. Games being played at the time
- b. New games to be played for the first time
- c. Old games no longer played

A House Full of History

Developing Word Sense

Good readers use context as an aid to understanding words and expressions as they read. The full meaning of a word or expression comes through when it is used in context, or together with other words.



The White House is the home of the President of the United States and his family. It wasn't called the White House until Teddy Roosevelt named it in 1901.

James Hoban designed the White House in 1792. He was awarded the job because he had won a contest sponsored by the government. His design had been selected as the best.

President John Adams was the first to live in the White House. When he and his wife, Abigail, moved in, it was a huge mansion in the middle of a swamp. Many of the rooms were unfinished. Abigail used the famous East Room as a drying room for laundry. More rooms were decorated every year. Rare shrubs and trees were planted on the grounds.

Yet, all this work was for nothing. In the War of 1812, the British burned the mansion to the ground. The White House was rebuilt in 1817. The beauty of its decorations and furnishings has been growing ever since.

Find the Best Meaning

Put an x in the box before the best answer.

The White House contest was sponsored by the government. This means that the government

- ☐ a. received the prize.
- ☐ b. invented the design.
- ☐ c. held the contest.
- ☐ d. was against having a contest.

Putting Context to Work

An expression in the last paragraph tells us that the White House was completely destroyed. Underline the expression.

It Takes More Than Wishing on a Star!

How Well Do You Remember Facts?

We all have dreams and wishes for getting ahead in life. What facts are revealed in this person's struggle for success? Try to remember them as you read.

1 How do you think most dreams are fulfilled? If you can't count on a fairy godmother, the best method is hard work. Mary Bethune understood that. Through hard work, she made her dream come true. Because of her efforts, Blacks were able to get a better education than ever before.

2 Bethune was born in South Carolina. She was the child of former slaves. She worked in fields, picking cotton, for the first ten years of her life. Then a school for Black children opened. Bethune begged to attend. A scholarship sent her on to higher schooling.

3 She trained to be a missionary, but could not find work. So she found a way to help the people nearby. First she taught Black children. Then Bethune built them a school. Years of hard work to raise money paid off. For twenty years, the school trained Black girls. Then it merged with a men's college. It became Bethune-Cookman Junior College.

4 Bethune knew that education had changed her own life. She wanted to provide that opportunity for all.



Fact-Finder Quiz

Put an x in the box before the best answer.
What did Bethune study to be?

- ☐ a. A principal
- ☐ b. A missionary
- ☐ c. A minister
- ☐ d. A cotton picker

Get Your Facts Straight

The three facts below were revealed in the first three paragraphs of the passage. Draw a line to connect each fact to its paragraph.

Paragraph	Fact
1	Mary Bethune built a school.
2	Mary Bethune had dreams.
3	Mary Bethune went to school.

As Funny As Ever



How Well Do You Remember Facts?

In this passage about Charlie Chaplin, you will learn some things about him that made his films very popular for so many years. As you read, look for the name given to his special kind of comedy.

1 What makes Charlie Chaplin funny? Why does the image of his face, with its tiny moustache, stay in your mind? What makes his funny, unbalanced walk so hard to forget? Well, it may be a mixture of talents that made Chaplin a comic genius.

2 His first film appeared in 1914. For the next fifty years, Chaplin was tied to the film world. His most famous films are *City Lights*, *Modern Times* and *The Gold Rush*. These films were made in the 1930s and 1940s. Yet people still find them funny today. Why?

3 Chaplin created a character everyone could love. He always played a friendly tramp. He used pantomime. With no words at all, Chaplin made the tramp funny, lovable and

unforgettable.

4 Chaplin was daring. He combined slapstick with sentiment. Slapstick is a type of silly comedy that involves lots of body movement. Sentiment is tender feelings. By mixing the two, Chaplin made films whose appeal has lasted for many years.

Fact-Finder Quiz

Put an x in the box before the best answer.

Which of these things did Charlie Chaplin not use in his movies?

- ☐ a. A silly costume
- ☐ b. Clever words
- ☐ c. Slapstick
- ☐ d. Pantomime

Get Your Facts Straight

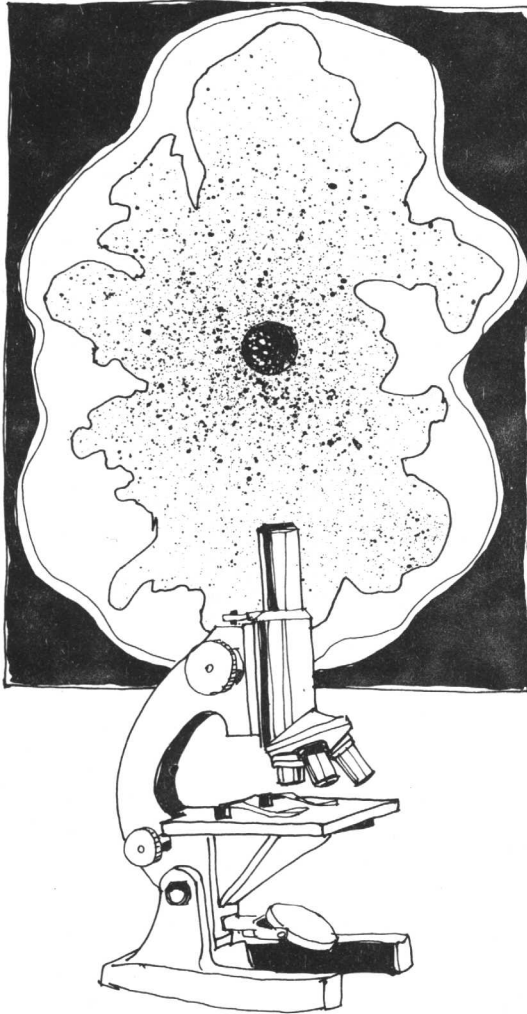
Which paragraph in the passage tells about a special type of comedy? Circle the number.

1 2 3 4

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF LIFE

How Well Do You Remember Facts?

In this passage about cells, we learn that all living things are made up of cells. As you read, look for the ways all cells are alike and the ways they are different.



Look around you. How many different forms of life can you see? Most likely there are people close by, but you may be able to see other living things, too. Are there any plants, fish or small animals in your room? Besides being alive, do you know what all of these creatures have in common? The answer is cells. All living things, regardless of size, are made up of cells.

All cells are made up of cytoplasm and a nucleus. The nucleus controls the actions of the cell. Cytoplasm surrounds the nucleus. It carries out the work of the cell. The contents of each cell are held in by a cell membrane.

Although animal cells are different from plant cells, all animal cells are made up of the same parts. The exact number and type of cells are different in each living thing. That is what makes a seal different from an ant.

Fact-Finder Quiz

Put an x in the box before the best answer.

The nucleus controls

- ☐ a. the actions of the cell.
- ☐ b. the contents of each cell.
- ☐ c. the number and type of cells.
- ☐ d. the work of the cell.

Get Your Facts Straight

Fill in the blanks with the correct words.

The _____ and _____ of cells make each living thing different.

GOING FOR THE GOLD

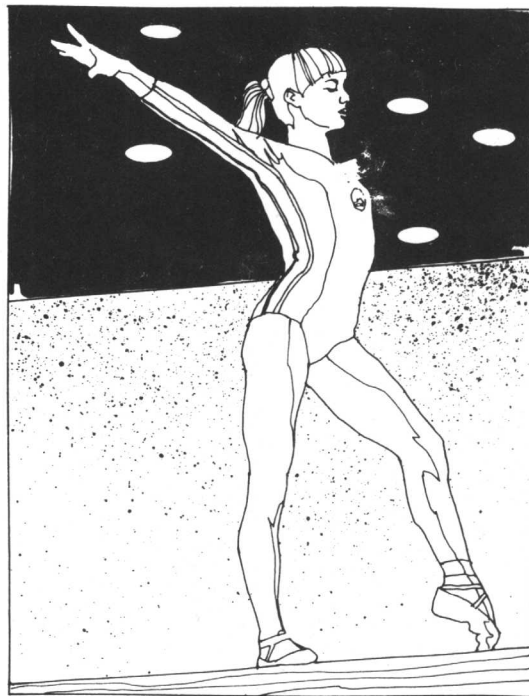
How Well Do You Remember Facts?

If you've ever seen Olympic events on television, you know how hard the female gymnasts compete. As you read this passage, notice the various events each girl participates in during the Games.

Many people who watched the 1976 Olympics felt that the competition between two particular young girls was the most thrilling sports contest of all time. Olga Korbut, a Russian, and Nadia Comaneci, a Rumanian, challenged each other for the gold medal in gymnastics.

The first two days of gymnastics were for team events. Olga's scores were 9.75 on the vault, 9.8 on the balance beam, and 9.9 on the bars. But they weren't the highest scores. Nadia finished her bar routine and waited for the score. The board lit up with a 1. The crowd fell silent over such a low score. Then they burst out clapping. They realized it meant a 10. The scoreboard was programmed to reach only 9.99. It had no way to record a 10. So it lit up a 1. Nadia achieved the first perfect score ever given in the Games. Yet Nadia's high score could not push her team ahead. The Russians won the team event.

The next two days were for individual competition. In these events, 14-year-old Nadia got three more perfect 10s and three gold medals. This time she came out on top!



Fact-Finder Quiz

Put an x in the box before the best answer.

What country was Olga Korbut from?

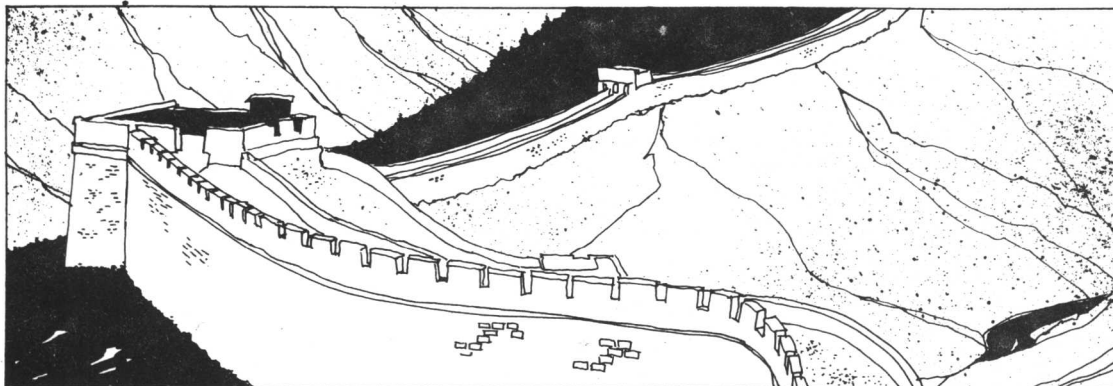
- ☐ a. Bulgaria
- ☐ b. Rumania
- ☐ c. Russia
- ☐ d. The United States

Get Your Facts Straight

Without looking back, circle the events that were mentioned in the passage.

balance beam	bars
floor routine	trapeze
vault	rings

The Longest Wall



How Well Do You Remember Facts?

You may have seen pictures of the Great Wall of China. If you have, you know that it is very huge. As you read this passage, see if the facts and details fit the picture of the wall that you have in mind.

The longest fortified wall ever built is in northern China. It is known as the Great Wall. It stretches for 1,500 miles. That's as long as the distance from New York City to Dallas, Texas.

The Great Wall is about twenty-five feet high. Towers thirty-five to forty-five feet high are set into the wall every 200 yards or so. These towers once held guards. A roadway wide enough for horsemen was made along the top. The wall is made of brick, earth and stone. It was built completely by hand and took hundreds of years to finish.

The Chinese emperors had the wall built around 200 B.C. It was built to keep the Tartars out of China. The Tartars were fierce warriors who often swept down into China on

their fast horses. They carried off livestock, women and gold. So fierce were their acts that they were thought to be from Tartarus, which is the Greek word for hell. That's how they got their name.

Fact-Finder Quiz

Put an x in the box before the best answer. How tall are the guard towers of the Great Wall?

- ☐ a. 25 feet high
- ☐ b. 35 to 45 feet high
- ☐ c. over 50 feet high
- ☐ d. 200 years or so

Get Your Facts Straight

The story tells us what the Great Wall is made of. Four things are listed below. One of them was not used in building the wall. Circle that material.

brick

granite

earth

stone